

Professional Well-being & Burnout

Surviving the Pressures of the Best Job You Ever Had

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Case Presentation

- 49 year old white male physician presents to colleague: “I can’t do this anymore! I have no energy for work.”
 - 20 years in community clinic
 - Difficulty going to work
 - Sense of nothing to give
 - Guilty over growing resentment of patients
 - Minimal sense of accomplishment



Burn Out: Prevalent Stress Syndrome

- 3 main symptoms
 - Exhaustion
 - Detachment
 - Loss of satisfaction



Burn Out

- Prime factor in turnover, absenteeism, declining morale, and personal dysfunction
- Hope→Trigger for revitalization



Malaise: Health Care Provider Dissatisfaction

- Epidemic of low morale
- Struggles, concerns, frustrations
- Hard to find minimal job satisfaction let alone VITALITY & ENTHUSIASM



Why?

- What do you think are the primary reasons that health care providers burn out?



Causes

- Stress +
 - Lack of control
 - Suppression of emotion
 - Striving for perfection
 - Workaholic tendency



In Other Words...Out of Balance

- Enantiadromia
- The solution lies in the Native American idea of wellness



Thesis

- A “well” health care professional will maintain an enthusiastic commitment to service and have an abundance of positive energy to face challenges thus experiencing a fulfilling career.



Wellness Defined

- When all aspects of our lives are in balance & harmony
- More than absence of disease or enjoying good health
- Reflected in behaviors & attitudes

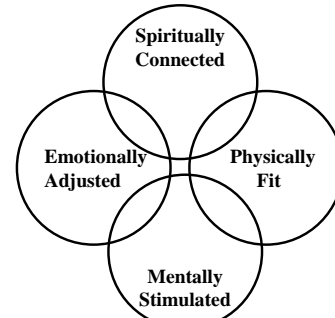


Wellness Circle

- Gift from Native community
- Four aspects of life
- When in balance & functioning at optimum
 - Physically fit
 - Mentally stimulated
 - Emotionally adjusted
 - Spiritually connected



Wellness Circle



Spirituality

- The key. The foundation. The essence.
- To Native people – spirituality is foremost
 - Reverent attitude toward all things
 - Awe, gratitude, worship
- Awake to a divine presence in all things



Spirituality vs. Religion

- Intertwined and related, but not equivalent
- Spirituality precedes religion
- Religion can be thought of as a bridge to spirituality
- Religion may enhance or hinder spirituality



Spirituality

- About belief systems involving mystery & faith
- Focuses on intangible elements
- Brings purpose & meaning



Difficult for Professionals

- We have traveled the path of science
- Modern medical education chooses logical, analytical, and rational approaches
- We value the mind
- Our cultural tendency to deny mystery has left us spiritually undernourished & out of balance



My Story with a Traditional Healer



Spiritual Assessment

- Do I have a sense of connection with the divine? With others?
- Do I have awe & reverence, yet a feeling of oneness with the Great Spirit?
- Do I live a life of trust?
- Am I called to service?



Analogy with Physical Fitness

- Exercise
- Good diet
- Avoiding bad habits



Exercise

- Prayer/meditation – comparable activity in spiritual realm
- No spiritual power without daily discipline



Daily Practice of Meditation

- Allowing silence to fill your mind
- Brings an increased sense of well being & energy
- Can build awe & awareness of divine presence working within us



Healthy Diet

- How do we feed our spiritual lives?
 - Time in nature
 - Ceremonies
 - Church
 - Reading inspirational/devotional material
 - Listening to music
- The key to practice it regularly



Avoiding Bad Habits

- Three habits block spiritual health & prevent connectedness
 - Complaining
 - Lack of forgiveness
 - Worrying



Complaining

- Easy & common – an initial reflex when things don't go the way we want
- Opposite of gratitude
- Difficult to trust or be open to divine will



Lack of Forgiveness

- We have all been hurt & memories are long
- Bitterness poisons the spirit & closes the heart
- Forgiving is letting go, a release that opens us to connectedness
- Forgiving is an act of the heart that brings peace of mind



Worrying

- Being troubled about something
- Carrying a core of anxiety – a heaviness
- Common in physicians
- Opposite is peace of mind



Anxiety to Peace of Mind

- Mindfulness – being in the moment
- Prayer – Brings perspective
- Trust – ultimately it will be ok



Impact of Spirituality

- Sense of “calling”
- Attitude
- Expectation
- Need for control



Sense of Calling

- Think about how you came to your present position. Chance, luck, or careful preparation?
- Spiritual perspective – led or called to position
- Profound implications



Implications

- Chosen for a unique set of gifts to meet a particular need beyond our knowledge can give energy and resolve when times are difficult
- Expands one’s purpose and opens the possibility that one’s work is sacred
- Native American believes that the work a physician performs is sacred



Attitude

- Consider the impact on attitude of a vital spirituality
- Attitude is a reflection of self
- Stanford studies of peak performance
 - 85% attitude 15% ability



Attitude Impacted by Spirituality

- Enter each day with a sense of reverence toward all
- Awake to the divine – come to all problems with trust
- Expectancy vs. defensiveness



Expectations

- 1 in 10 concept
- $E \pm R = S$
- Spiritual perspective – release expectations to divine will – TRUST
- Results in an openness that does not tie one's values to outcomes



Need for Control

- Struggle for more/fight any loss → Frustration
- At the heart of spirit is mystery
- To be adjusted is to not let the things you have no control over bother you.
- TRUST – Acceptance of divine will



Trust

- The operative work for being connected spiritually
- Belief in what can't be seen or proved
- Mystery that the energy of the universe is love
- The creator/divine power holds us in its hands



Spirituality's Gifts

- Purpose
- Presence
- Power



The Secret

- “It is only with the heart that one sees rightly for what is essential is invisible to the eye.”
- Our happiness & well-being ultimately are determined by our inner world



So . . .

- Commit to nourishing your own spirituality or inner life
 - Daily
 - Weekly

